

EXETER-WEST GREENWICH September 10, 2008

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

MINUTES

The Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School District School Committee held a meeting on this date at 7:00 p.m. in the Jr. – Sr. High School Library. Members present were Susan DeSack, Chairperson; Teri Cicero, Vice Chairperson; Gregory Coutcher, Clerk; Mary Walsh; William Munroe; and Robert Bollengier. Member Frank Maher was absent. Superintendent Thomas J. Geismar; Director of Curriculum Nancy I. Daley; and Director of Special Services Carmella Farrar were present. Director of Administration Robert V. Ross left the meeting early at 7:22 p.m. Student Member Katherine Matook was absent.

ORDER – Chair DeSack called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all and Member Walsh read the District Mission Statement.

OPEN FORUM –Exeter parent Commander Muhitch requested permission to distribute an advisory from the Rhode Island Department of Education to the School Committee to pass on to the kindergarten subcommittee. Chair DeSack said that all School Committee members were provided with the advisory in their School Committee meeting packets last Friday. Commander Muhitch

requested to make a correction to the statement he gave at the last School Committee meeting regarding eligibility for kindergarten enrollment waivers. He clarified that Dr. Geismar is the approving authority for granting waivers, not Mrs. Marino. Chair DeSack said that kindergarten enrollment is an item for discussion on tonight's agenda. Open Forum is a time to address the Committee on items not on the agenda.

PRESENTATION – Student Member Report – Dr. Geismar said that he has

Ms. Matook's written Student Member Report. Chair DeSack requested to enclose the report in members' packets for the next regular meeting.

ROUTINE ITEMS – CONSENT AGENDA – Superintendent Geismar gave an overview of the Consent Agenda.

Vice Chair Cicero moved to accept the consent agenda. Seconded by Member Bollengier. Voted 6 – 0 in favor.

The following items were approved:

A. Approval of Minutes – Regular Corrected Minutes of August 12, 2008; Regular Minutes of August 26, 2008; Executive Session Minutes of August 26, 2008

B. Personnel Items

1. Appointments – (As Recommended by the Superintendent) – (No

change to FTE's)

a. Wendy Miller as 0.5 FTE District-wide Social Worker, Step 4, M, Salary \$23,891.50; effective on or about September 11, 2008

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2. Leaves of Absence – (As Recommended by the Superintendent)

a. Kelley Fraser-Pigeon's request for a parental leave of absence beginning at the end of her maternity disability and continuing through the month of November and returning on or about December 1, 2008

b. Andi Kenyon's request for a parental leave of absence beginning at the end of her maternity disability and continuing through January 22, 2009 and returning on or about January 23, 2009

3. Resignations – (As Recommended by the Superintendent)

a. Letter of Resignation from Samuel Ciotola from his position as 1.0 FTE Behavior Specialist at Metcalf School, effective August 19, 2008

4. Grievances

5. Recalls

6. Non-Renewals

7. Sabbaticals

C. Bills – 2008/09 Bills the amount of \$239,025.37 and 2007/08 Accruals in the amount of \$3,680

D. Home School Approvals

End Consent Agenda

Correspondence – (1) September 3, 2008 Memorandum from Superintendent Geismar to School Committee Regarding School Calendar 09/10; (2) September 3, 2008 Memorandum from Superintendent Geismar to School Committee Regarding NOAA Public Alert Radios

Monthly Status Reports- Superintendent – Members did not express any questions or concerns regarding the Status Reports at this time.

Business

Curriculum

Special Education

Maintenance

Technology

Monthly Subcommittee Report(s) – Transportation Subcommittee Report – Chair DeSack advised that this item shall carryover to the next regular meeting agenda due to Transportation Subcommittee Member Maher's absence from this evening's meeting.

Member Bollengier requested to revert back to the Business Status Report. In response to Member Bollengier's inquiry about Sodexo Food Service's pending follow-up regarding upgraded lunchroom equipment costs, Director of Administration Robert Ross

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said that he was told by Sodexo manager Rick Giuntoli that the cost to the district will be zero for the new equipment. Presently, Sodexo is using equipment they acquired from other facilities. Vice Chair Cicero advised that Dr. Beth Waine informed her of a grant that is available for food service equipment/supplies which she has forwarded to EWG school nurse teacher Dawn Seitz.

NEW BUSINESS – 403B Update (TPA Administrator) – Director of Administration Robert Ross informed the Committee that effective January 1, 2009 the federal government will require districts to comply with the 10 items listed in his memo enclosed in members' packets. He advised that these 403(b) regulations will require a high level of expertise and time commitment to manage compliance. Therefore, RIASBO issued a RFP and has awarded it to Gatekeeper. The fees for 2008/09 are \$4,074.50 and thereafter \$2,736.00 per year.

Member Munroe made a motion to award Gatekeeper as the third party provider of the 403b. Seconded by Clerk Coutcher. Voted 6 – 0 in favor.

Town of Exeter-Request for Reimbursement – Director of Administration Robert Ross informed members that he received a request from the Town of Exeter that the District assist the Town with the connection costs for the emergency generator at Metcalf School. Mr. Ross brought members' attention to the Memorandum of Understanding dated October 10, 2007. It states in item 2 that the

School will assist the Town with the connection costs as agreed. He said that the Exeter Town Council has asked that the District reimburse the \$1,030.71 paid for the installation.

Member Walsh made a motion to approve the payment of \$1,030.71 to the Town of Exeter for the installation of the emergency generator at the Metcalf School. Seconded by Clerk Coutcher.

Member Bollengier reminded members that when this issue originally came to the School Committee he was opposed because he felt this would pass on municipal costs to the District. He questioned why the District is being asked to absorb 100% of the installation costs for the Town's property. Member Munroe said that he too opposed this issue when it was originally brought before the School Committee. He questioned why the Town of West Greenwich is not being asked to contribute as well. He expressed his opinion that the installation cost should be divided three-ways between the District and the Towns of Exeter and West Greenwich.

Chair DeSack restated the motion on the table made by Member Walsh and seconded by Clerk Coutcher. Voted 0 – 6. Motion defeated.

Chair DeSack asked Mr. Ross to tell the Town of Exeter that the understanding was that the District would help with the installation.

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Delta Dental Rate Increase – Member Bollengier made a motion to accept the rate increase for Delta Dental. Seconded by Member Munroe. Voted 6 – 0 in favor.

Director of Administration Robert Ross left the meeting at this time, (7:22 p.m.).

Special Education Staffing Policy – Director of Special Services Carmella Farrar informed members that all districts are now required to come forward with a plan for developing a Special Education Staffing Policy. Chair DeSack voiced her opinion that this is a large undertaking and asked members if they want to assign a special policy subcommittee for this task. Ms. Farrar interjected and informed Chair DeSack that the State has provided districts with a draft policy that the policy subcommittee can make its own. She advised the Committee that this task may not be as cumbersome as it first appears, the policy adoption process will require public input, most policy subcommittees have dedicated 3 to 5 hours to tweaking the draft to make it their own, and the policy must be submitted to RIDE by March 1, 2009. Policy subcommittee Member Bollengier voiced his opinion that Ms. Farrar's timetable, as presented, is not overwhelming. Chair DeSack advised Ms. Farrar that the policy subcommittee will work with her to accomplish this task.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – New Graduation Requirements – Update – Superintendent Geismar reported that the Board of Regents voted last week to approve the New Graduation Requirements. Dr. Geismar said that the Board has a lot of explaining to do. He said that he attended a Superintendents' meeting the very next day and consensus there was that no one understands the new regulations. Districts will require guidance from the Board regarding the new regulations which take effect for this year's freshman class. Chair DeSack questioned how the District has time to implement the new requirements if they became effective subsequent to the start of this school year.

Vice Chair Cicero informed members that the Board voted in spite of the fact that SIT Collaborative members expressed concerns and spoke to them in Open Forum for over one-hour. She expressed four main concerns regarding the new regulations. (1) The regulations were rolled out without a plan; (2) The Board never answered SIT's concerns regarding the lack of support from RIDE [due to staffing reductions at RIDE]; (3) The new formula used to assess students' proficiencies in academic areas does not equal 100%; and (4) The financial obligation placed on districts. Vice Chair Cicero said that when asked where funding will come from, the Board indicated that districts will have to work with what they have. She said that David Abbott of RIDE validated that districts will actually have to eliminate important things to make this happen. Vice Chair Cicero informed members that the deadline for the District to inform parents about the

new regulations is October 1, 2008. She expressed her opinion that the new regulations are politically motivated and are unfair to students. Chair DeSack expressed her opinion that teachers will end up teaching to the test.

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Capital Project Update – Superintendent Geismar updated members on the status of the Capital Projects to date. He reported that there is a one-year workmanship warranty on Metcalf’s gymnasium floor repair. In response to Member Munroe’s request for a copy of the gymnasium floor warranty, Chair DeSack advised him to contact Building Committee Chairperson Jim Woloohojian to request the documents. She reminded Member Munroe that the School Committee is not managing the Capital Bond Project. In response to Member Munroe’s inquiry, Chair DeSack said that at the next meeting she will provide information relating to where Capital Project documents will reside once projects are complete.

Kindergarten Eligibility Update – Chair DeSack reported that as per the Committees’ discussion at its last meeting, a call was made to the Rhode Island Department of Education and an initial ruling letter was received back. A copy of the letter is enclosed in members’ meeting packets. The ruling does allow the District some latitude to use its discretion to consider enrollment for children born after the

September 1st eligibility date, with a specific selection criteria. At the last School Committee meeting a subcommittee was formed to investigate consideration to allow early enrollment in the District. Clerk Coutcher and Members Munroe, Maher, and Walsh had volunteered to serve on the subcommittee.

A discussion developed relating to having one too many members serving on the subcommittee. Clerk Coutcher said that he will withdraw from the subcommittee. Member Munroe recommended that since Member Maher will not be continuing on the School Committee [after the upcoming election], that Clerk Coutcher should remain on the subcommittee and Member Maher should withdraw. Clerk Coutcher said that he will contact Member Maher to ask him if he wishes to withdraw. If so, Clerk Coutcher said that he will remain on the subcommittee. He said that he will e-mail Member Munroe regarding Member Maher's response. Chair DeSack advised subcommittee members to realize the impact this change would have on the District. She reminded them about what must be considered if this change is allowed.

Mrs. Muhitch, Exeter, requested to address the School Committee. Member Bollengier interjected and clarified that this issue is not a matter of subject for the full Committee since the subcommittee has been charged with this issue. Mrs. Muhitch read a statement, detailing events, correspondence, and circumstances involving Superintendent Geismar and surrounding the matter of her request to

enroll her child in Kindergarten for the 2008/09 school year. Mrs. Muhitch requested the Committee rescind its decision of its last meeting and requested that Administration enroll her child into kindergarten this school year.

Chair DeSack said that the vote of the Committee stands. The subcommittee will investigate what the criteria is and will select the criteria and guidelines concerning early enrollment. She asked subcommittee members to consider probable circumstances that

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may occur if the change is allowed. Such as, deciding how to fill three open slots when seven parents are requesting early enrollment for their children and/or filling an open slot with an early enrollment student and then afterwards receiving a new regular enrollment or group home enrollment student. She voiced her opinion that it should not be on taxpayers' backs to hire new FTE's that are the result of early enrollment. She advised that the School Committee has voted to up hold the eligibility deadline for this current school year. Anyone wishing to speak to this matter shall take it up with the subcommittee. In response to Commander Muhitch's request to address the Committee, Chair DeSack said he could, if his comments were not relating to kindergarten enrollment.

REPORTS/COMMENTS – None

IMPORTANT DATES AND MEETINGS – Wednesday, September 17, 2008-Capital Bond Building Committee Meeting; Tuesday, September 23, 2008-School Committee Meeting; Wednesday, September 24, 2008-Capital Bond Building Committee Meeting

EXECUTIVE SESSION – RIGL 42-46-4 AND RIGL 42-46-5 – None

ADJOURNMENT – Member ~~Richard~~Bollengier moved to adjourn at 8:04 p.m. Seconded by Clerk Coutcher. Voted 6 – 0 in favor. Meeting adjourned 8:04 p.m.

ROBIN CERIO

CLERK